

MINUTES

CITY PLAN COMMISSION/ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD

JANUARY 3, 2011

The City Plan Commission/Architectural Review Board of the City of Clayton, Missouri, met upon the above date at 5:30 p.m., Chairman Harold Sanger presiding. Upon roll call, the following responded:

Present:

Chairman Harold Sanger
Steve Lichtenfeld, Aldermanic Representative
Craig S. Owens, City Manager
Jim Liberman
Scott Wilson
Ron Reim

Absent:

Marc Lopata

Also Present:

Susan Istenes, Director of Planning & Development Services
Jason Jaggi, Senior Planner
Kevin O'Keefe, City Attorney

Chairman Sanger welcomed everyone to the meeting. He asked that all cell phone ringers be turned off or muted and that conversations take place outside the room so as not to disrupt the meeting. He reminded everyone of the newer recording equipment, noting that microphones have to be turned on to ensure proper recording.

MINUTES

The minutes of the December 20, 2010 meeting were presented for approval. The minutes were approved, after having been previously distributed to each member.

CENTENE PLAZA GARAGE – MODIFICATION TO PREVIOUSLY APPROVED PLANS – 7730 FORSYTH BOULEVARD

Dan O'Connor, the Koman Group, developer, was in attendance at the meeting.

Susan Istenes explained that this is a request for consideration of proposed modifications to the location of the Ned Kahn-designed wind veil on the exterior of the Centene Plaza parking garage. On March 15, 2010, the Architectural Review Board approved the wind veil to be applied on the entire north, west, and most of the east elevations, above the ground-floor commercial

level (please refer to attached meeting minutes). The developer is requesting that the wind veil be completely omitted from the west elevation and be applied to only a portion of the east elevation. The application on the north elevation facing Forsyth Boulevard will remain as originally approved. Changes to the exterior design of the garage are also subject to approval by the Board of Aldermen in accordance with the Centene Plaza Special Development District ordinances. The wind veil system features moving stainless steel panels and cables which create a watery ripple effect across the façade when activated by wind. This system of small metal panels, cables and swivel mechanisms will be attached to the trusses at the top of the garage and the roof of the retail space and will cover parking deck levels P3 through P9. The commercial ground floor will not be covered by the treatment. The proposal calls for the wind veil to be applied to the entire northern façade. On the eastern façade, the plans are modified so that the wind veil will terminate at the end of the garage openings. Previously, the wind veil extended to the stair tower and a glossy black version of the system was to be applied to face the Forsyth Court area, south of the elevator tower. The submitted plans do not indicate any changes to the proposed LED lighting which are to be installed on the top of the bottom trusses behind the metal panel system. According to a letter submitted by Dan O'Connor of The Koman Group, the developer is requesting approval of the revised plans due to the possibility of redevelopment of the parcels to the west of the garage which would conceal the wind veil from view and the finished look of the existing architectural pre-cast panels on the west elevation. On the east façade, scaling back the application would preserve the atmosphere of the Forsyth Court area. Susan noted that the original application of the wind veil system was well-received by the Architectural Review Board and the Board of Aldermen given the parking garage's prominent location in the Central Business District. The developer is requesting a scaled-back version of this unique façade treatment, which staff finds only partially acceptable. Approximately one-half of the east elevation will receive the wind veil treatment, in a location which is most visible from Hanley Road. The remaining sections of this elevation face inward to the Forsyth Court area and contain breaks in the façade, which provide visual interest. For these reasons, staff supports the modifications, as proposed, to the east elevation. With respect to the west elevation, staff is very concerned with the aesthetic impacts of leaving the west elevation in its current condition. This elevation consists of a large, solid, blank, concrete wall which contains no visual relief. Its massing is very pronounced at the intersection of Forsyth Boulevard and Bemiston Avenue and especially travelling east on Forsyth Boulevard. Although the applicant states that the expense of the originally approved wind veil does not justify its installation should the adjacent property be redeveloped, it is staff's opinion that the architectural pre-cast concrete panels as installed do not go far enough to reduce the massing nor do they create visual relief. Furthermore, no guarantee exists that the property to the west will be redeveloped nor is there any guarantee that the extent of redevelopment, if and when it occurs, will obscure the large blank wall area of the garage structure. In summary, staff supports the scaling back of the wind veil as proposed for the east elevation, but does not support the elimination of the wind veil on the west elevation and therefore, staff recommends approval of the proposed modification to the east wall and to deny the proposed modification to the west wall.

Mr. O'Connor began a PowerPoint presentation. He indicated that they believe there is the potential for future development of the property to the west. He then reminded the members of the original approval for the garage exterior when Phase I and II were approved, showing glass panels only extending back 40 feet with the remainder of the wall being the exposed pre-cast concrete. He stated that back in the fall when the wind veil was presented and approved, they did not take the possibility of future development to the west into account. He stated that

this is something they feel very strongly about and asked for approval of the proposed modifications.

Steve Lichtenfeld commented that since the wind veil was the most recent approval, that approval should be considered; not the original approval. He stated that the wall (west elevation) has no character, no texture and is out of context. He stated that he feels it is a blot on the landscape and will not support the removal of the wind veil from that elevation.

Scott Wilson commented that losing the wind veil on that big chunk of this large structure would hurt its aesthetic value. He stated that this project has become very special and that he has bragged about the wind veil.

Mr. O'Connor asked if the Board would consider re-approving the glass panels originally approved.

Chairman Sanger informed Mr. O'Connor that the glass panels are not what were presented for consideration this evening.

Ms. Sally Cohen, 6464 Ellenwood, agreed with Scott Wilson and that the wall is much more visually appealing with the wind veil applied.

Chairman Sanger stated this is brazen and he is not ready to deviate from the agreement and cannot imagine an alternative to the wind veil. He stated that he is very excited about the installation of this wind veil and does not support a change to the west wall.

Being no further questions or comments, Steve Lichtenfeld made a motion to approve the proposed modification to the east elevation and to deny the proposed modification to the west elevation (as per staff recommendation). The motion was seconded by Jim Liberman and unanimously approved by the Board.

The question of what authority the City has with regard to church projects was brought up.

Kevin O'Keefe reminded the members that the City's powers do not extend beyond health/safety codes and parking adequacy and safety of vehicular movement. He stated in terms of land use, the City has very little say so, based on the Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

Chairman Sanger announced that the proposed site plan for the Wydown Middle School project is going to appear on the next Plan Commission agenda (January 18th).

Scott Wilson indicated that he will recuse himself from that discussion and/or vote.

Being no further business for the Plan Commission/Architectural Review Board, this meeting adjourned at 5:44 p.m.

Recording Secretary